

HEPATITIS C: TREATMENT

Arizona Department of Corrections
Health Service Bureau

Inmate Wellness Program
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To Treat or Not to Treat

Most people with hepatitis C lead normal lives and will not need medical treatment. Talk with your medical provider about whether you need treatment. The latest combination treatments can get rid of hepatitis C in half or more of the people who take them.

Many things need to be considered before you begin treatment. Your doctor may need to know more about the amount of the virus in your blood (or viral load) and the type of hepatitis C virus (or genotype) that you have. Also, treatment is decided on an individual basis according to an ADC Guideline, which follows federal guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). It depends on several factors, such as the progression of the disease, lifestyle behaviors (such as drug and alcohol use), and age.



If you are diagnosed with hepatitis C, educate yourself and talk with the health care staff to see what you can do to stay healthy.

Treatments Currently Available

The medications approved to treat hepatitis C include:

- Interferon - a medicine that you inject under the skin to fight hepatitis C.
- Pegylated interferon - a new type of interferon that lasts longer in the body.

- Ribavirin - a pill that helps fight hepatitis C when used with interferon.

Side Effects

Side effects are things that might happen in your body because of your treatment. Some side effects are serious and make you feel sick. Others are mild and make you feel a little different than normal. Having side effects from hepatitis C treatment is very common, and does not mean that the treatment should be stopped.

Keeping Healthy

The best way to help your treatment work is to follow your doctor's advice. Here are some other suggestions:

- Take care of yourself. Eat well, drink at least 8 glasses of water each day, exercise regularly, and try to get 6-8 hours of sleep a night.
- Learn about the medications that are used to treat hepatitis C. If you don't understand something, ask the health staff.
- Try to keep all your appointments with your doctor.
- Check with your doctor before starting new medicines. This includes vitamins, prescription drugs, or other over-the-counter drugs.